

Now, by a lopsided vote of 89–10, the Senate has sent the House a short term measure negotiated by Democratic Leader REID and Republican Leader MCCONNELL to prevent taxes from going up on 160 million Americans next year, offset with a provision both parties can support—with an accelerated decision on the Keystone XL pipeline due in sixty days.

So what are the House Republicans doing? Trying to kill the bipartisan Senate bill. In fact, they won't even allow a straight up or down vote on it—because if they did, they know it would pass.

Americans need look no further than this reckless year-end gambit by the extreme right wing of the Republican Party to understand why their government has ceased to function.

Like President Obama and virtually every Democrat in this House, I would rather be voting on a year-long extension for the current payroll tax cut, unemployment insurance for

those who remain out of work through no fault of their own, and reasonable compensation for physicians who participate in the Medicare program. Additionally, I would prefer a balanced approach to paying for these measures—and I oppose mandating a precipitous decision on the controversial Keystone XL pipeline.

But in order to ensure 160 million Americans don't see a tax increase on January 1, and to give negotiators more time to reach final agreement on a fully paid-for year-long package, I am prepared to support the Senate's bipartisan short term extension.

Mr. Speaker, Senate Democrats have approved this legislation. Senate Republicans have approved this legislation. And House Democrats are prepared to approve this legislation. If House Republicans block it, they will have to explain to the American people why rigid ideology was more important than helping

create more jobs and boosting our fragile economy.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 23, 2011

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, December 20, 2011, I was unable to be present for a series of recorded votes. I request the record show that had I been present, I would have voted: “no” on rollcall vote No. 947 (on the motion to table H. Res. 504), “yes” on rollcall vote No. 831 (on the motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 3630), and “no” on rollcall vote No. 832 (on agreeing to H. Res. 501).